



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

Grand Canyon National Park

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## Grand Canyon News Release

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### **National Park Service Seeking Comments on future operation of train service within Grand Canyon National Park**

**Grand Canyon, Ariz.** – The National Park Service (NPS) is now accepting public comments on the future operation of train service within Grand Canyon National Park. The NPS proposes to allow up to three round-trip passenger trains per day from Williams to the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park and one round-trip evening train ride per day from the South Rim to a short distance outside of the park.

The purpose of this action is to provide a viable alternative for vehicle access to the South Rim and one that allows visitors the opportunity to experience the historic use of trains in the park. The South Rim of the Grand Canyon receives approximately 4.5 million visitors each year. During 2007, over 230,000 of these visitors arrived by train. In accordance with the Grand Canyon National Park's 1995 General Management Plan, the continued use of the train service "will encourage alternatives to private automobile travel to Grand Canyon."

The primary objectives for this planning effort are as follows:

- to assess the opportunity for more visitors to enter the park without relying on a private vehicle;
- to maintain the historic use of the train in the park;
- to assess the opportunity for visitors in the park to enjoy the Grand Canyon via the evening train ride;

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- to ensure compatibility with current transportation options in the South Rim Transportation Plan;
- and to cooperate with gateway communities, Native American tribes, agencies and other stakeholders to achieve mutual transportation goals.

The NPS will evaluate the operation of train service including allowing up to three trains per day plus one evening train. Currently, each of the trains on a round trip from Williams to the Grand Canyon carries approximately 1,046 passengers. Each of the evening trains on a round trip carries approximately 322 passengers.

The evening train ride would operate from May to September. Weekly work trains and occasional special use trains would also be permitted within the park. Tracks five and six are currently unused and may be put into operation to make use of the original track configuration which allows for more convenient and safer passenger loading and unloading near the Grand Canyon Depot.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) for the operation of the railway will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide the decision-making framework for the following:

- to analyze a reasonable range of alternatives to meet project objectives;
- to evaluate potential issues and impacts to park resources and values;
- and to identify mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of impacts.

The NPS encourages public participation through the NEPA process during which the public has two opportunities to formally comment on the project – once during initial project scoping and again following release of the EA. The NPS is currently in the scoping phase of this project and invites the public to submit their comments.

Any train service within the park would be operated by a concessioner holding a valid concessions contract with the NPS pursuant to the National Park Service Concessions Management Act of 1998. Any future contract would be consistent with the findings of this EA.

Comments will be accepted for 30 days and should be either posted online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca> or sent to: Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, Attn: Office of Compliance and Planning, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023 by October 4, 2008. Current information about this project can be found on the park's Web site at

[www.nps.gov/grca/compliance](http://www.nps.gov/grca/compliance) or by contacting Paula Homan, Project Planning Leader, at (928) 638-7956 or Laura Shearin, Concessions Specialist, at (928) 226-0169.

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